The Purpose of this Report

Since 1968 POINT Foundation has published thousands of positive evaluations of a wide assortment of books, periodicals and tools which have provided its readers with new ideas, innovative resources and links to new communities. These reviews have indeed proved to be empowering for our readers while the collection itself has not fared so well.

Because of lack of space and staffing, the POINT collection is currently stored in a somewhat random manner making it difficult to use as a research tool. Recognizing the caliber of the collection — twenty-two years of authoritative literary works focussing on individuals and their environments — POINT has been examining how to effectively catalog, organize, and shelve the 6,000-7,000 books, publications and catalogs now housed at the Whole Earth offices and how to incorporate the new material which is constantly being added to the collection.

The following report is a result of an intensive three month research study done by employees of POINT Foundation during the summer of 1990. The research was made possible through the generosity of the Marin Community Foundation which awarded POINT a planning grant for the specific purpose of studying the economic and practical feasibility of organizing this collection and creating an environmental resource library.

We have identified the processes necessary to realize the organizational phase of this project, however there remain many basic issues to be resolved before further steps can be taken to create a publicly accessible library. This report is not to be construed as a commitment to the creation of such a library, but as has been written to provide fuel for consideration by the POINT Board of Directors, Whole Earth staff and other concerned individuals.

The research for this report was conducted by POINT employee Lori Wolpert, with the strong support of POINT librarian David Burnor. To address major issues, these two individuals did in-depth research and called on many experts in the library field both in Marin County and in the Bay Area.

We would like to thank these experts for their help and hope they will continue to assist POINT in its quest to build an innovative library which will serve not only the organization but the community. Specific individuals we would like to acknowledge are Alice MacNamee of the Marin County Library system, Steve Cisler of the Apple Computer Library, Rose Falanga of The Exploratorium, Elva Yanez of the Marin County Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, and Jan Hewitt of the Pac Bell Library.

Introduction

Since its inception, POINT Foundation has viewed the concept of *environmental awareness* with a more extended definition than is generally used by the media or in current political debate. Our planet and its inhabitants are seen as parts of an interrelated "whole system" (a "whole earth"), encompassing not only plants and animals, land, oceans and atmosphere, but also people, the houses they build, the communities they live in, their livelihoods, families and even the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors they employ day to day.

Through its publications, POINT Foundation has been a leader in providing up-to-date answers to a broad range of questions generated by the public's growing awareness of global issues, offering its readers the most practical and innovative information currently available about environmental concerns.

The POINT library's principle function in this process is to serve as a research tool for editorial staff, a distillation of the best and most useful ideas and resources collected over many years on how to create interconnected, dynamic models of life on Earth. It is the basis for editorial comparison in the evaluation of new information as well as the source material for POINT's ongoing activities in print and electronic publishing. This study acknowledges that the immediate goal of the cataloging and organization of the library collection would be to facilitate this editorial purpose.

In addition to staff usage, this study has considered the broader issue of public access to the collection through the creation of a Whole Earth Environmental Resource Library. Such a facility could be seen as a consumer-oriented entity dedicated to offering its members POINT's accumulated knowledge in an organized, easy-to-use fashion and to serve as a place where communities based on "whole system" thinking can be fostered.

The organization and cataloging of the collection would be the necessary first step and once it is accomplished, legitimate researchers could begin to be accommodated on a limited basis. However the Environmental Resource Library would be the most expensive portion of this study to be implemented. Given the realities of library funding and the fact that POINT Foundation has always operated on a very slender budget, plans for a Whole Earth Environmental Resource Library, as outlined in this report must be viewed as a long-term goal which will require further discussion before a policy decision could be made.

Phase I: Organization & Cataloging

The Current Library

Over the past twenty-two years, review copies of books, periodicals and catalogs have flowed into the POINT offices on a daily basis. Many of these items have been reviewed in various POINT publications — *Co-Evolution Quarterly, Whole Earth Review* and the *Whole Earth Catalogs*. This collection is used by the Whole Earth editorial staff as a research tool.

With limited resources, our part-time librarian has endeavored to keep up with this flow, sorting books by domain and computerizing the index. Because of time and money constraints, this effort has been insufficient and as POINT looks to the future, it has become very clear that an effective, functioning library will be the key to its usefulness and vitality.

The Collection

Whole Earth publications have been reporting on the environment in creative, entertaining and stimulating ways for 22 years. We have reviewed and recommended fascinating, educational works by prominent authors in a variety of fields. Our contributors represent a network of dedicated professionals, seeking better ways to deal with the complex nature of our environment. Whole Earth's reputation for discovering the most valuable resources in a wide variety of subject areas is the product of an ongoing collaboration between our editorial staff and our contributors, readers, and other organizations.

Stewart Brand, founder of POINT and Publisher Emeritus of *Whole Earth Review*, has helped to attract the skills and talents of many interesting and informative people, including Paul Hawken, Gregory Bateson, J. Baldwin, Ken Kesey, Catherine Bateson, Gary Snyder, Wendell Berry, Sallie Tisdale, Stephanie Mills, James Lovelock, and others. We also have extensive and productive contacts with many other organizations, such as Planetree Health Resources Library, Briarpatch Network, Rocky Mountain Institute, Global Business Network, and New Alchemy Institute.

Our library collection will continue to be generated by *Whole Earth Review*, by new editions of the Catalog, such as the *Electronic Whole Earth Catalog* and *Whole Earth Ecolog* (October, 1990), and through suggestions from our friends and readers.

Cataloging

To maintain compatibility with the office automation systems currently being used by POINT, the library will utilize Macintosh computer systems. A dedicated computer and printer will be required for the retrospective conversion of the catalog. We have found two software programs — *Filemaker* database and *Inmagic* textbase software — that are well equipped to carry the library catalog database. These offer flexibility and feature data interchange capabilities which will be satisfactory for the library's needs. *Filemaker* will be used to compile records during the organizational phase of this project. *Inmagic* will be neededto compile standardized bibliographic data for Phase II, integration with the Marin County Library and our own public access library.

Adaptability will be the key to this database as our catalog records will include unique information, encompassing our evaluations of each item in the context of our organizational domains. Much of this information is contained in existing index files. We can compile basic records for thousands of the titles that will exist in the the library catalog by downloading the indexes into a *Filemaker* database.

This core database will include titles, authors, our own subject headings and references to the Whole Earth publication where the item was reviewed.The *Filemaker* database format will also allow the future addition of fields that could contain the text of our reviewer's evaluations, extensive electronic cross-referencing, and consumer information, such as current prices, publisher's mail-order addresses and telephone numbers.

Once the retrospective cataloging has been completed, spine labels will be generated and the collection can then be sorted and shelved. The sorting process will allow us to assess our shelving needs and allocate space, and to begin planning for future expansion.

Staff access to the catalog would be provided most efficiently on-line via a Local Area Network within the POINT offices. Since most staff use of the collection will be in-house, the circulation system need not be elaborate in order to keep track if inventory. "Check-out" fields can be incorporated into each data record making it simple to locate each item when it is needed.

Acquisitions

Since the library has the good fortune of existing in tandem with POINT publications — in fact could not exist without them — acquisition expenses will be minimal in the years to come. Review copies of books have been, and will continue to be, readily available from publishing companies. Because we are also magazine publishers, we are able to acquire other periodicals on a trade basis. The primary initial acquisition expense, therefore, will be to replace books that have been damaged, lost or misplaced in past years. This expense will taper off as the library completes its collection.

Our main acquisitions tool is Books In Print which provides us with the data necessary to purchase back-list titles and to request review copies of current books from publishers. We currently purchase Books In Print as an annual set of hardbound volumes, with periodic updates. We plan to upgrade to Books In Print on CD-ROM which will be electronically compatible with our library computer system. The superior speed and search capabilities of this system will enhance our acquisitions process and also provide electronic data that would feed the library catalog database.

Administration

During the library's organizational phase, staff time will be allocated to the creation of a library database format, retrospective conversion of existing catalog files to the new format, sorting and labeling the collection, designing and arranging shelving, and moving and shelving the books. Ongoing operations will include maintaining the current collection, acquiring, cataloging and shelving new material, and assisting library users.

Phase II: The Whole Earth Environmental Resource Library

Goals

In creating an Environmental Resource Library, POINT could make its collection readily accessible to its editorial staff, the Marin County Library community, and the library's membership via different communication media. The foundation of this communication system will be a dynamic central database. The first building block in the creation of the database will be the cataloging and classifying of the 6,000-7,000 titles now on hand.

As the database is built, we can continue to add to our inventory of books, catalogs, periodicals, and video and audio cassettes. These new acquisitions would be cataloged and incorporated into the database. The library staff will organize and maintain the collections, and assemble clipping files and specialized information packets on environmental issues, current technologies, and innovative products.

Once the database is operational, computers could be made accessible to members for personal research. Space could be provided for organized readings, classes, and discussions held by authorities on given subjects. A small bookstore, carrying Whole Earth publications and products, could operate as an adjunct to the library.

Membership

Because of its specialized nature and limited financial and spatial resources this would be a private, membership-only library. Local members will clearly be our main users, since most outreach will be directed toward Marin County.

Exact fees have not been determined, but there could be a range of membership classifications which will incorporate certain rights and privileges. A portion of the operating expenses would be generated by membership fees, class and lecture fees, the sale of information packets, and bookstore revenue.

Visits by members would be by appointment, during business hours. Because outside usage of the library must be balanced with the needs of the Whole Earth editorial staff, the appointment system would ensure that the greatest range of material needed for a particular research project can be located and made available at the time of the appointment.

Audience

Currently *Whole Earth Review* has over 2,500 subscribers in the Bay Area. In addition, there are thousands who use the Marin County Library System, and a growing number of individuals in Marin County who would benefit from the existence of a local clearinghouse for environmental education resources. These individuals along with staff members of POINT Foundation, who use the library on a daily basis, would constitute the main body of our audience.

In addition to on-site use, the public could be able to communicate with the library via phone and/or mail. In the future we would like to provide on-line access to our database through the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL) teleconferencing system, with the WELL subscriber community enrolling at that time.

The Marin County Library does not yet possess the capabilities for on-line communication but would like to begin the local networking process by distributing a list of our titles to branch librarians in the County, who will make the list available to their patrons.

Cataloging

During the organizational phase we will have compiled records for most of the volumes in the collection. These records will include titles, authors, our own subject headings and references to the Whole Earth publication where the item was reviewed. Other data, such as Library of Congress numbers and subject headings, International Standardized Book Numbers (ISBN), publisher's name, price, number of pages etc. are obtainable as MAchine Readable Cataloging (MARC) records.

MARC records are generated by the Library of Congress and sold by private vendors, as on-line databases, or CD-ROM systems. Some University libraries also provide access to MARC records. We hope to utilize the on-line library services provided by University of California at Berkeley as much as possible. However, since the initial retrospective conversion will involve such a large number of records, it may be necessary to purchase a CD-ROM system, such as Bibliofile. The data from UC Berkeley and/or Bibliophile can then be imported into the database via the *Inmagic* software program which provides the bridge between MARC data formats and microcomputers.

Information Accessibility

POINT has no plans to create a lending library. The collection would be restricted to on-site use. However an tools could be constructed to facilitate members' research and provide ready access to information.

A photocopier could be available for making duplicates of articles, reports, and excerpts from books. Audio and video equipment would allow members to take advantage of the wide range of recorded books and instructional video tapes now available. Members could have use of a computer for transcribing research information and to search and download data files produced by our library and other on-line information systems.

On request, specialized information packets could be assembled by library staff, containing bibliographies, excerpts from books, lists of organizations, articles, newsletters, government reports, etc. These packets would be priced according to the complexity of the topic and the amount of information included. A fax machine would facilitate the transmittal of this type of information from the library's files.

Automation

A computer would be accessible in the library for the use of members and staff, to provide access to a wide assortment of information housed in the POINT collection and elsewhere.

Our automated catalog would make it possible to locate any given title in the library. The computer system could also access outside information sources such as the on-line library catalog service of the University of California at Berkeley, the WELL, other telecommunication systems, and on-line databases such as DIALOG. The addition of a CD-ROM drive to the computer system would allow library patrons to access various commercial CD-ROM products, such as our own *Electronic Whole Earth Catalog*.

Eventually this library and the Marin County Library could be connected electronically, possibly through the WELL, allowing County librarians to access our files quickly and efficiently.

Administration

During its organizational phase, the library would require two full-time employees to begin converting the catalog files, find available office space close to the POINT offices, order and sett up furniture, move the books, arrange the shelves, and procure and maintain the computer, copier, fax machine and video/audio equipment.

Once the library is operational, it will also require at least two full-time employees. The Librarian would be responsible for updating inventory, keeping the shelves organized, locating books, assisting members, compiling information packets, etc. The Library Assistant would be responsible for scheduling appointments, coordinating speakers, classes and discussion groups, and performing other clerical duties.

These individuals would draw up a policy-and-procedures manual, generate and oversee the budget, and perform community outreach. They would also take part in the on-going task of generating core funding by increasing membership, locating available grants and/or soliciting contributions.

Location

Because of the symbiotic relationship between the magazine and the library, the importance of remaining in close proximity to the POINT office complex is a high priority. The ideal location would be within the office complex where POINT is currently located. Furthermore, the collection will require enough physical room to expand, now and over the next 10 years.

Therefore we would seek a site within easy reach of the POINT offices that would provide a quiet, comfortable place for staff and members to carry out their research, and to meet with the community, in surroundings beneficial to a free exchange of information and ideas.

While decor is obviously less important than the inventory itself, this space should be furnished in a way that is attractive, functional and conducive to productivity. Comfortable chairs, wood shelves, natural light, and environmental-education displays, would all contribute to that atmosphere.

Timeline

Because of manpower and fiscal constraints, a three-year creation time line has been recommended. The consultants who advised us urged us to give ourselves two years to catalog and shelve our collection and to create the central database. These two functions of cataloging the collection and creating a central database are vital to POINT's future.

The process to create the systems and environment necessary for the library outlined in Phase II would not begin until Phase I has been completed. Once the central database is created and the collection has been shelved and cataloged, only limited public access could be accomodated. Since new businesses usually take some time to grow and bring in customers, it can be assumed that the library would not develop its user base until the third year.

Issues for POINT to consider

- Is there a need or desire for the kind of unique information POINT can offer?
- What use would the POINT staff have of a functional library?
- Should the POINT collection be accessible to the general public?
- What fees could POINT charge for membership? Information packets? Information access? What portion of operating expenses would this cover?
- What sort of fund raising would POINT have to do on an annual basis to meet operational costs?
- What would be the costs and benefits involved with just creating a functional central database?
- Can POINT afford any additional library expense? (Or, conversely can it afford not to invest further?)
- Where would funding come from? Can POINT go to its supporters again for
- Is POINT going to remain in Marin for the next few years?

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(see David's document)
....., and assisting library users--functions POINT currently carries out, though unsatisfactorily due to limited resources.

Conclusion--Phase I

In Phase I POINT would seek to make its library much more useful internally. Some very basic but very detailed and time-consuming work is required, and it would be undertaken using the most up-to-date methods. During this phase, limited access could be given to outside users, such as academics and bonafide researchers, but the main purpose would be to increase the efficiency of POINT's editorial and publishing activities.

Phase II. Whole Earth Environmental Resource Library

As a minimum, Point Foundation must undertake Phase I to have a fully effective library for internal use. Because Point has such a special collection of whole systems publications--both extensive and selective--, it could consider making them publicly available as the Whole Earth Environmental Resource Library (WEERL [How about Point Environmental Resource Library (PERL)?]).

Once the organizing and electronic cataloging described in Phase I is completed, Point could create a computer link to the Marin County Library system, making available to users the catalog of publications at WEERL. To provide any on-going public access to the library, however, a dedicated space would be required. At this new site, a computer could be made available to public users for personal research. The users could use books on site. In addition, space could be provided for more general interaction with the public--space for organized readings, classes, and discussions.

Because of the space required and the staff time to work with the public, the WEERL, or Phase II, is much more complex and expensive than is Phase I. We discuss the relevant issues in this section.

Membership

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